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# Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century

## Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith the statement of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session (see annex).

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# Annex

## Statement of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session entitled "Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century"

1. We, the Executive Heads of the organizations of the United Nations system, are committed to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality as essential for the reduction and eradication of poverty, and the achievement of peace, human rights and sustainable development.

2. We acknowledge that progress has been made in creating an enabling environment for women's empowerment and gender equality through implementation of commitments made at the United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s, in particular the Fourth World Conference on Women.

3. However, significant challenges remain. Renewed efforts are needed to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Global and local developments and trends offer both opportunities for, and challenges to, gender equality. New approaches are needed to address these opportunities and challenges within the Platform's vision of gender equality and women's empowerment. Policy interventions to minimize the risks of globalization and to ensure the most positive outcomes for women throughout their life cycle need to be identified and implemented. Specific policy issues concerning women and girls, such as work-related rights, gender-based violence, reproductive and sexual health and rights, education and social security, access to productive resources including credit and nutrition require sustained attention. Institutions and individuals need to be equipped to deal with the opportunities and challenges in processes of rapid change in a manner that supports the promotion of gender equality.

4. Women and men must be equal partners in shaping the twenty-first century. We strongly believe that political will and accountability for the realization of gender equality are fundamental prerequisites. We are increasingly assuming responsibility and accountability for active promotion of gender equality in our policy, normative and operational work, through our programmes carried out in partner countries and through strengthened inter-agency partnerships in its achievement. We account for progress through better monitoring and reporting.

5. We commit ourselves to intensified action in support of accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming. Accordingly:

(a) We will strengthen our support to Governments at the country level in their implementation of national action plans for gender equality and in institutional capacity-building;

(b) We will continue to promote gender mainstreaming in the policy dialogue with Governments/Parliaments and civil society, and between Governments;

(c) We will encourage and support the sharing of experiences and of good practices in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and in using the gender mainstreaming approach in a cross-cutting manner;

(d) We will continue to develop and implement programmes and projects targeted at women to reduce existing inequalities and to promote gender equality;

(e) We will ensure that gender equality implications are addressed in all our sectoral and thematic work, including through increased capacity of all staff for gender mainstreaming, through gender-sensitive planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, the development and use of good practices and other measures;

(f) We will continue to develop and refine tools and resources to guide gender-responsive policy-making and planning, including using statistics which are disaggregated by sex and highlight issues of gender equality;

(g) We will take the necessary steps to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed in country programming such as the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and consolidated appeal processes;

(h) We will work to ensure an increased focus on both women and men and the relations between them, and men's full participation in promoting gender equality at all levels;

(i) We will provide the necessary support and resources towards the realization of these commitments, including strengthening the mandates and resources of organizational mechanisms, such as gender units and gender focal points, which are necessary to realize the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

6. Within our own organizations, we are taking positive measures to significantly increase the representation of women, including at the most senior level, towards the goal of 50/50 gender parity set by the General Assembly. This has required special administrative measures and focused programmes of affirmative action, which we expect to be temporary in nature. However, we have also taken steps to address the more difficult and long-term challenges of changing the culture of our organizations to become more gender-sensitive. We have increased our awareness of what gender equality means to each organization and have implemented positive measures to make our work environments more responsive to the requirements of both women and men.

7. Further action is needed to achieve the goals set in the Platform for Action and in other intergovernmental mandates. Accordingly:

(a) We will strengthen managerial competence and accountability for gender equality and a gender-sensitive work environment;

(b) We will improve recruitment policies and practices to ensure that women are appointed in our organizations, especially in senior management and operations positions;

(c) We will take steps and develop common policies on retaining women, especially through effective spousal employment assistance, inter-agency mobility and improving career development opportunities for women;

(d) We will create and enhance a supportive and gender-sensitive work environment;

(e) We will develop effective accountability mechanisms to ensure that our actions match our policy commitments;

(f) Finally, we will work to build partnerships with Governments, civil society and the private sector and within the United Nations system to achieve gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century.